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Biographical and Bibliographical Sketch

BY

A. GROWOLL



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HENRY HARRISSE

HENRY HARRISSE'S name is connected with one of the most erudite bibliographies ever published; indeed, according to Nicolas Trübner, Harrisse's "Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima" is a "work unrivalled in its extent, accuracy, and comprehensiveness." This is the more remarkable because Harrisse had no bibliographic training, and because the work in question was his first attempt in this field. Before undertaking the work on the "Bibliotheca Americana," he had devoted himself exclusively to art, criticism, and the history of philosophy, translating into English and annotating all the metaphysical works of Descartes. Being unable to find a publisher in America for that class of books, he turned his attention to other subjects. At this time—about 1864–65—he made the acquaintance of Samuel Latham Mitchill Barlow, the generous collector to whose munificence bibliographical science is indebted for this splendid publication. Mr. Barlow shortly before had bought the library of Colonel Aspinwall that was destroyed in the fire which consumed the premises of Bangs, Merwin & Co., 696 Broadway, where the books were temporarily stored. Fortunately, Mr. Barlow, a few days before this disaster, had removed to his house a number of the rarest treasures in the collection. Harrisse was tempted, by the aid of Mr. Barlow's rich mine of invaluable works, to write a history of the beginnings, the decline, and the fall of the Spanish Empire in the New World. In making his selections

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among the many works, Harrisse naturally made a preliminary work of bibliography, and he began with Columbus. These notes were first published in two instalments in the New York *Commercial Advertiser* under the title of "Columbus in a Nutshell." Mr. Barlow, finding that these notes were eagerly demanded by those interested in the subject, proposed that they be reprinted with some important additions. Mr. Harrisse in preparing the additions did not rest satisfied with the material in Mr. Barlow's collection, but consulted, also, the works relating to the period in such other prominent libraries whose owners were public-spirited enough to grant access to their treasures. These studies were included in the following volume: "Notes on Columbus. New York. Privately Printed. 1866." (vii+227 p. 13 photographs. Fol. 99 copies, of which 2 were on India paper.) The volume consists of a series of notes and extracts from rare books, relating to Columbus, with numerous valuable bibliographical and historical notes. It contains also an account of the poems, eulogies, essays, etc., in honor of Columbus, and is a treasury of fact and fancy, relative to the great navigator. The photographs add much to the interest of the book; they consist of (1) A Portrait of Columbus from De Bry. (2) Annotations in the hand of Columbus on the margin of a copy of D'Ailly's "Imago Mundi." (3) Recto of the first leaf of Plannck's supposed first edition of Leander de Cosco's Latin translation of Columbus's Letter to Raphael Sanchez. (4) Recto of first leaf of Plannck's supposed edition (corrected). (5, 6) Recto of first and last leaf of Silber's edition of the Letter. (7, 8) Recto of first and second leaf of Guyot Marchand's first edition of the Letter. (9) Verso of the first half of Guyot Marchand's first edition. (10) Recto of the first leaf of Guyot Marchand's second edition. (11) Monument erected to Columbus at Genoa in 1854. (12) Annotations in the hand of Columbus on page 22 of Æneas Sylvius's "Historia rerum ubique gestarum," etc. (13) Last page of an autograph letter of Columbus.

These researches inspired Harrisse to prepare a study of all the authentic facts relating to the discovery, the conquest, and the history of America down to the middle of the sixteenth century. The bibliographical data collected in the course of these investigations became the nucleus of the

"Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima A Description of Works relating to America Published Between the Years 1492 and 1551. . . . New York: George P. Philes, Publisher, MDCCCLXVI." (8+liv.+519 p. 400 copies in roy. 8°; 99 copies in 4°; and 10 copies in 4° on Holland paper, for private distribution.) In this work Harrisse describes and gives the collations, mostly from personal observation, of no less than 304 important and rare books relating to America, published in various languages between 1492 and 1551, commencing with the "Epiſtola Chriſtofori Colom," first published in 1493, and ending with the first edition of Ramusio's collection of voyages published anonymously in 1550. As a specimen of American typography this bibliography has never been surpassed. The titles are printed in facsimile letters, and where woodcuts appear on the title-page they are also given in facsimile. Each book is described at length, and some account is also given of the author and his labors, the various editions of his works and their differences; and as all the books described are of excessive rarity, Harrisse gives the names of the American libraries in which they were to be found on the 4th of May, 1866, the period when he completed his labors. "Had Mr. Harrisse done no more than here stated he would have more than fulfilled all the duties of the bibliographer; but he has gone further, and has added to each description a list of the books in which information may be found regarding the works thus listed. Further, knowing how important it often is to the historian and to others to consult the original works on which opinions and statements are based, he carefully gives references, chapter and verse, for every fact he states—thus in his first description of the letter of Columbus, he gives no less than ninety-one notes, chiefly references to works consulted. Bibliographies are too often mere dry catalogues—transcripts of title-pages and nothing more. This volume is not to be classed with such publications. It is in fact a history, without which no future American historian can efficiently perform his task. Nay, it is a cyclopædia of facts relating to the early history of America, without which no large library can be considered complete. In his introduction, which, by the way, contains an admirable defence of Bibliography as a science, the author enumerates the labors of his predecessors

in the same field, describing their works and giving some brief account of their history."* In view of all this, it is noteworthy that, after thirty-two years, the small edition of 450 copies that was offered to the public at cost price is not yet exhausted.

Harrisse in 1872 published a supplementary volume, entitled "Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima A Description of Works relating to America, Published between the Years 1492 and 1551: Additions. Paris: Librairie Tross." (4+xl+ 199 p. 200 copies in 8°, 50 copies in 4°.) This volume is not, properly speaking, a continuation of its predecessor, but a series of notes and additions "intended to aid towards forming a complete list of works relating to the discovery, history, and geography of America, printed previous to the year 1551." It contains bibliographical notes gathered in the leading libraries of Europe, and 186 articles, two-thirds of which are new. The other third is composed chiefly of descriptions *de visu* of extremely rare editions, which Harrisse had succinctly cited on the authority of other bibliographers, or published only in the appendix to the "Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima."

Harrisse was born in Paris in 1830. When quite young he came to the United States to join his family, and went South, where he taught modern languages to support himself while he was studying law. He received the degree of A.M. from the South Carolina College, read Blackstone with the Hon. W. W. Boyce, and prepared himself for the bar in the Law Department of the North Carolina University. The Hon. Stephen A. Douglas induced him to settle in Chicago; but after a few years of unrequited efforts as a lawyer, he removed to New York and entered the office of the late N. Dane Ellingwood (at 59 Exchange Place,) at that time one of the most venerable and learned members of the legal profession. Harrisse is still entitled to plead in our courts. Thirty years ago he made Paris his home. Being discouraged at the treatment which his works, all written solely to promote a documentary and initial knowledge of the history of our country, received at the hands of the American public, Har-

*Nicolas Trübner in *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record*, September 1, 1866.

risse gave up Americana. During two years he studied Egyptology at the Louvre, under his friend Professor Maspero, translated several papyri from the Hieratic, and commenced a commentary on the Heretical Kings of the XVIIIth dynasty. At Mr. Barlow's urgent request he relinquished these studies and returned to American subjects, toiling henceforth and unremittingly and gratuitously, as usual, at the task of clearing up obscurities that rest upon the period of American discovery, which includes the voyages of Columbus, Vespucci, the Cabots, and Cortereal. Notwithstanding his sojourn in France, he retains his American citizenship. On the occasion of the Columbus quarter-centenary, Harrisse was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor by the French Government. Since 1854 he has published sixty-nine volumes and pamphlets in English, French, Spanish, and several other languages.

The following is a short title list of his bibliographical writings:

1. The Dictionary of Philosophical Sciences. (*Southern Quarterly Review*, July, 1854.)
2. An Essay on the Literary Institution best adapted to the present wants and interests of our Country. Columbia, S. C., 1858. 8°.
3. French Histories of France. (*North American Review*, January, 1863.)
4. M. Ernest Renan. A Biographical Essay. New York, 1864. 8°.
 Introduction to an English translation of Renan's "Études d'histoire religieuse."
5. Bibliotheca Barlowiana. New York, 1864. 12°. (Privately printed; four copies only.)
6. Letters of Christopher Columbus describing his First Voyage to the Western Hemisphere. Texts and Translations. New York, 1865. Folio, with facsimiles. (Privately printed; ten copies only.)
7. Notes on Columbus. New York, 1866. Folio, with plates. (Privately printed.)
8. Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima. (See title above.)
9. D. Fernando Colon, Historiador de su Padre; Ensayo Crítico. Seville, 1871. 4°.
10. Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima. Additions. (See title above.)
11. Notes pour servir a l'histoire, a la bibliographie et a la cartographie de la Nouvelle France et des pays adjacents. 1545–1700. Paris, 1872. 8°.
 A bibliography of Canada, with documents and descriptions of manuscript maps, up to 1700.
12. Introduction de la Imprenta en America, con una Bibliografia de las obras impressas en aquel hemisferia desde 1540 a 1600. Madrid, 1872. 8°.
 A chapter, enlarged, of the "Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima,"

originally published under the following title: "A Brief Disquisition Concerning the Early History of Printing. New York: *Privately Printed*, 1866." Imp. 8°, 25 copies, of which 5 were on drawing paper.

13. Fernand Colomb, sa vie, ses œuvres. Essai critique. Paris, 1872. Large 8°.
14. Les Colombo de France et d'Italie, fameux marins du XVe siècle; 1461–1491. D'après des documents nouveaux ou inédits tirés des archives de Milan, de Paris et de Venise. Mémoire lu à l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres dans ses séances des 1er et 15 mai 1874. Paris, 1874. 4°.
15. L'Histoire de Christophe Colomb attribuée à son fils Fernand. Examen critique. Paris, 1875. 8°. (Separate issue of articles in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie.*)
16. Le Voyage de Verrazzano. Paris, 1876. 8°.
Critical review of the work of the Hon. Henry C. Murphy, with new documents, in the *Revue Critique.*
17. Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut. Bibliographie et notes pour servir à l'histoire du livre. Paris, 1875. 8°. Revised and enlarged ed., Paris, 1877. 8°.
18. Los Restos de Don Cristoval Colon. Disquisicion. Seville, 1878. Small 4°.
19. Les Sépultures de Christophe Colomb. Revue critique du premier rapport officiel publié sur ce sujet. Paris, 1879. 8°.
20. Jean et Sébastien Cabot, leur origine et leurs voyages. Étude d'histoire critique, suivie d'une cartographie, d'une bibliographie et d'une chronologie des voyages au Nord-Ouest, de 1497 a 1559. D'après des documents inédits. Paris, 1882. Large 8°. With facsimile of the North American section of the Cabotian planisphere.
21. Christophe Colomb et la Corse. Observations sur un décret récent du gouvernement francais. Paris, 1813. 8°.
22. Les Corte-Real et leurs voyages au Nouveau-Monde. D'après des documents nouveaux ou peu connus tirés des archives de Lisbonne et de Modène, suivi du texte inédit d'un récit de la troisième expédition de Gaspar Corte-Real et d'une importante carte nautique portugaise de l'année 1502, reproduite ici pour la première fois. Mémoire lu à l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres dans sa séance du 1er juin 1883. Paris, 1883. Large 8°, with facsimile of the American section of the Cantino planisphere, folded in a case.
23. Gaspar Corte-Real. La date exacte de sa dernière expédition au Nouveau-Monde. D'après des documents inédits récemment tirés des archives de la Torre do Tombo à Lisbonne. Paris, 1883. Large 8°, with facsimiles.
24. Christophe Colomb, son origine, sa vie, ses voyages, sa famille et ses descendants. D'après des Documents inédits tirés des archives de Gênes, de Savone, de Séville et de Madrid. Etudes d'histoire critique. Paris, 1884. 2 volumes, large 8°, with map, plates, and genealogical tables.
25. L'Origine de Christophe Colomb. Démonstration critique et documentaire. Paris, 1885. 8°.
26. Grandeur et décadence de la Colombine. Paris, 1885. 8°. (Privately printed.)

27. La Colombine et Clément Marot. Paris, 1886. 8°. (Privately printed.)
28. Grandeza y decadencia de la Colombina. Seville, 1886. 12°. Controversial articles reprinted from the Spanish papers.
29. Excerpta Colombiniana. Bibliographie de quatre cents pièces gothiques, françaises, italiennes et latines du commencement du seizième siècle, non décrites jusqu'ici. Précédée d'une histoire de la Bibliothèque Colombine et de son fondateur. Paris, 1887. 8°. With facsimiles of original types and illustrations.
30. Le Quatrième centenaire de la découverte du Nouveau-Monde. Lettre adressée à Son Excellence le Ministre de l'Instruction publique du royaume d'Italie. Par un Citoyen Américain. Genoa, 1887. Large 8°.
31. Christophe Colomb et Savone. Verzellino et ses "Memorie." Etudes d'histoire critique et documentaire. Genoa, 1887. 8°.
32. Christopher Columbus and the Bank of Saint George. New York and London, 1888. Large 4°, with plates and facsimiles. (Privately printed.)
33. Christoph Columbus im Orient. Leipzig, 1888. 8°. (Separate issue of an essay published in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*.)
34. Cristoforo Colombo e gli orientali. Genoa, 1889. 8°. (Separate issue of an Italian version of the above, published in the *Giornale Ligustico*.)
35. Document inédit concernant Vasco da Gama. Relation addressée à Hercule d'Este, duc de Ferrare. Paris, 1889. 8°. (*Per Nozze*, privately printed.)
36. The late Samuel Latham Mitchill Barlow. Introduction to the Catalogue of his American Library. New York, 1889. 8°. (Separate issue, with corrections and portrait.)
37. Christophe Colomb, les Corses et le gouvernement français. Paris, 1890. 8°.
38. Cristoforo Colombo e il Banco di S. Giorgio. Saggio storico-critico sui rapporti del grande navigatore con quell' istituto; sull' uffizio e sulle operazioni di banco nel medio evo e dimostrazione documentata dell' origine di Colombo dalla città di Genova sulla base di inediti o poco noti documenti. Genova, a spese del Municipio, 1890. Folio, with plates and facsimiles. (For private distribution by the City Council of Genoa.)
39. Nouvelles recherches sur l'histoire de l'Amérique. Paris, 1890. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Revue Historique*.)
40. Qui a imprimé la première lettre de Christophe Colomb? Leipzig, 1892. 8°. (Separate issue of a critical dissertation published in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*.)
41. The Discovery of North America. A Critical, Documentary, and Historic Investigation, with an Essay on the Early Cartography of the New World, including descriptions of Two Hundred and Fifty Maps or Globes, existing or lost, constructed before the year 1536. To which are added a Chronology of One Hundred Voyages Westward, Projected, Attempted, or Accomplished between 1431 and 1504; Biographical Accounts of the Three Hundred Pilots who first crossed the Atlantic; and a copious List of the Original Names of

American Regions, Caciqueships, Mountains, Islands, Capes, Gulfs, Rivers, Towns, and Harbors. Paris, H. Welter, 1892. Large 4°, with twenty-three facsimiles of ancient charts and globes.

42. Christophe Colomb devant l'Histoire. Paris, 1892. 8°.
43. Colomb n'est pas né à Savone. (Article in the *Revue Historique*, November–December, 1892.)
44. Christophe Colomb et ses historiens espagnols. Paris, 1892. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Revue Critique*.)
45. Autographes de Christophe Colomb récemment découverts. Paris, 1893. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Revue Historique*.)
46. Colomb et Toscanelli. Paris, 1893. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Revue Critique*.)
47. Introduction to Christopher Columbus's Own Book of Privileges, 1502, compiled and edited by B. F. Stevens. London, 1893. Folio. (Separate issue; only twenty copies printed, for distribution.)
48. The early Paris editions of Columbus's first "Epistola." Leipzig, 1893. 8°. (Separate issue of an article in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, translated into English.)
49. A propos d'un manuscrit du ministère des affaires étrangères. Paris, 1894. (Separate issue, 8° and folio, with additions of an article published in the *Revue Critique*.)
50. Christophe Colomb et les académiciens espagnols. Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la science en Espagne au xixe siècle. Paris, 1894. Small 8°.
51. Sébastien Cabot, navigateur vénitien. Paris, 1859. 8°. (Separate issue of a series of articles published in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie*.)
52. Pro Academia Hispaniensi. Paris, 1895. 8°. (Separate issue of an article in the *Revue Critique*.)
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54. Americus Vespuccius. A Critical and Documentary Review of Two recent English Books concerning that Navigator. London, 1895. Fcap. 4°.
55. John Cabot, the Discoverer of North America, and Sebastian his Son. A Chapter of the Maritime History of England under the Tudors. London, 1896. 8°.
56. Un nouveau globe verrazanien. Paris, 1895. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie*.)
57. La cartographie verrazanienne. Paris, 1896. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie*.)
58. L'Abbé Prevost. Histoire de sa vie et de ses œuvres. (Documents nouveaux.) Paris, 1896. 12°.
59. Un Americanum rarissime. Paris, 1897. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*.)
60. Encore la Bibliothèque Colombine. Paris, 1897. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Revue Critique*.)
61. Sébastien Cabot considéré comme cartographe. Paris, 1897. 8°. (Sep-

arate issue of an article published in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie.*)

62. The Discovery of North America by John Cabot. The alleged date and landfall. New York, 1897. Small 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in the *Forum.*)
63. The Discovery of North America by John Cabot. [*Also,*] The Ship's Name the "Matthew" a Forgery of Chatterton? Third edition, revised and enlarged. London, 1897. Small 8°.
64. The Date of Cabot's Discovery of the American Continent, and an alleged Forgery of Chatterton. A Rejoinder. (Reprinted from *Notes and Queries.*) London, 1897. 12°.
65. Sébastien Cabot, Pilote-Major d'Espagne, considéré comme Navigateur. Paris, 1897. 8°. (Separate issue of an article published in Drapeyron's *Revue de Géographie.*) With a map.
66. L'atterrage de Jean Cabot au continent Américain en 1497. A memoir read before the Königl-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften of Göttingen, and extracted from its *Nachrichten.* Göttingen, 1897. 8°.
67. The Diplomatic History of America: its first chapter, 1452–1493–1494. London, 1897. 12°, with a comparative map, drawn by the author.
68. Did Cabot return from his Second Voyage? (Reprinted from *The American Historical Review* for April, 1898. pp. 449–455.) 8°.
69. The Outcome of the Cabot Quarter-Centenary. (Article in *The American Historical Review*, October, 1898. pp. 38–61.) 8°.
70. L.-L. Boilly, peintre, dessinateur et lithographe. Sa vie et son œuvre, 1761–1845. Suivis d'une description de douze cents peintures, dessins et lithographies de cet excellent artiste. 4to, with twenty-five facsimiles. (*In press.*)
71. Découverte et évolution cartographique de Terre-Neuve, 1497–1501–1700. Large 4to, with forty maps, drawn by the author. (*In preparation.*)

It may be interesting to add that all these works, besides several others, representing forty-four years of close study and hard labor, have yielded to Mr. Harrisse less than three hundred dollars all told. Further, he never was fortunate enough to find a publisher in America willing to undertake the publication of a single book written by him, although offered in every instance as a gift.

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